



TEXAS STATE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

Program News and Activities

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OCTOBER 2015

The TSSWCB produces this monthly update of the agency's activities as an informational service to local Soil and Water Conservation District Directors. I hope you find this information helpful, and if you have any questions about specific programs or projects please don't hesitate to call your local field representative or our state headquarters.

REX ISOM

Executive Director

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UPCOMING STATE BOARD WORK SESSION AND MEETING

The State Board has tentatively scheduled a Work Session on **Wednesday, November 18, 2015** and a formal State Board Meeting on **Thursday, November 19, 2015 in Austin**. More information is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/boardmeetings>, or by contacting Karen Preece at (254) 773-2250, ext. 245 or kpreece@tsswcb.texas.gov.

FISCAL OPERATIONS

Supplemental payments for Fiscal Year 2015 were made on November 2nd.

December 31st is the deadline for Fiscal Year 2015 Financial Statement approval and submission of Review/Audits.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Annual Meeting of District Directors in Corpus Christi celebrates 75 years and honors the 2015 Conservation Award Winners

There were over 600 attendees at the 75th Annual Meeting of District Directors in Corpus Christi.

Monday evening honored the 2015 Conservation Award winners:

- Soil and Water Conservation District: Fannin SWCD #520
- Farmer: Horward Book and Stephen Moreno (Victoria SWCD #343)
- Friend: Wilma "Sis" Regmund (Karnes County #343)
- Rancher: Mr. and Mrs. Luis Ramirez (Zapata SWCD #335)
- Teacher: Peggy Maddox and Kathy Dickson (Nolan County SWCD #245)
- Poster: Case Harris, Roby ISD (Upper Clear Fork SWCD #165)
- 13 & Under Essay: Macy Hahn (DeWitt County SWCD #339)
- 14-18 Essay: Joseph Garcia (Menard SWCD #215)

We also celebrated the following Soil and Water Conservation Districts 75th Anniversary:

Floyd County SWCD #104
Concho SWCD #201
El Paso-Hudspeth SWCD #205
Middle Clear Fork SWCD #206
Mitchell SWCD #207
Toyah-Limpia SWCD #209
Highland SWCD #210
Wilson County SWCD #301
Atascosa County SWCD #307
Nacogdoches SWCD #401
Davy Crockett-Trinity SWCD #404
Bowie County SWCD #408
Harrison County SWCD #412
Sulphur-Cypress SWCD #419
Anderson-Houston SWCD #421

Trinity-Neches SWCD #422
Red River County SWCD #423
Limestone-Falls SWCD #501
Ellis-Prairie SWCD #504
Kaufman-Van Zandt SWCD #505
Hamilton-Coryell SWCD # 506
Little River-San Gabriel SWCD #508

Central Texas SWCD #509
McLennan County SWCD #512
Taylor SWCD #513
Navarro SWCD #514
Palo Pinto SWCD #518
Dalworth SWCD #519
Fannin County SWCD #520
Cochran SWCD #149
Yoakum SWCD #150
Terry SWCD #151
Garza SWCD #158
Duck Creek SWCD #169
Andrew-Kent SWCD #170
Mustang SWCD #242
Howard SWCD #243
Midland SWCD #244
Glasscock County SWCD #251
North Concho River SWCD #252
Caldwell-Travis SWCD #304
Comal-Guadalupe SWCD #306
Gonzales County SWCD #338
DeWitt County SWCD #339
Karnes County SWCD #343
Bee SWCD #344
Hays County SWCD #351
Goliad County SWCD #352
Lamar SWCD #415
Upshur-Gregg SWCD #417
Freestone County SWCD #424
Wood SWCD #444
Hopkins-Rains SWCD #445
Rusk SWCD #447
Panola SWCD #448
Shelby SWCD #449
Montgomery County SWCD #452
Walker County SWCD #453
California Creek SWCD #545
Haskell SWCD # 546
Central Colorado SWCD #550
Callahan Divide SWCD #552

Thank you so much to the following businesses for their support of our Annual State Meeting.

MillerCoors
Capital Farm Credit
Texas Association Dairymen
USDA-NRCS

Foot Insurance
Texas Lottery
Texas Poultry Federation
North Star VMS Helicopters
Ag Workers Insurance
Texas Forestry Association
HOLT AgriBusiness
Audubon Texas
Native American Seed
Earth Day Texas 2016
Moir Watershed Services, LLC
Rex and Nancy Isom

Mark your calendars for October 17-19, 2016 and plan on attending the 76th Annual State Meeting held in Waco.

WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN PROGRAM

With the enactment of Senate Bill 503 in 1993, the Texas Legislature designated the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) the lead agency in the state for the abatement, management, and prevention of nonpoint source pollution from agricultural or silvicultural sources. Additionally, the Legislature authorized the agency to administer a certified water quality management plan (WQMP) program, complete with a cost-share program to incentivize participation and offset the cost of implementing soil and water land improvement measures, for lands within the state. While the TSSWCB makes the program available on a statewide basis, the State Board approves priorities based on activity and geography to target the cost-share incentive funding to the areas of the state that exhibit the most need for nonpoint source pollution abatement.

The purpose of cost-share funding is to provide an incentive to landowners or operators to install soil and water conservation land improvement measures consistent with the purpose of controlling erosion, conserving water, and/or protecting water quality. Rule requires this be done in accordance with a water quality management plan certified by the State Board.

FY2015 Water Quality Management Plan Program results:

- 359 Water Quality Management Plans certified on 219,967 total acres
- 613 acres on average per WQMP
- 20,519 acres of cropland
- 33,161 acres of pasture/hayland
- 157,849 acres of rangeland
- 9,300 acres under irrigation management
- 8439 other

On September 10, 2015 the regional offices conducted a ranking exercise to rank all FY2016 request for cost-share incentive funding. Regional office staff is currently working with those producers who ranked out, to develop a certified WQMP. Once the WQMP is certified an application for Cost-Share Incentive funding is completed. This application obligates funding to that producer to be used to implement Best Management Practices. More information on the *Water Quality Management Plan Program* is available at

<http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/en/wqmp>

TEXAS NONPOINT SOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires states to develop a program to protect the quality of water resources from the adverse effects of nonpoint source (NPS) water pollution. The *Texas NPS Management Program* is the State's comprehensive strategy for addressing NPS pollution. The program publication is updated every five years. The most recent revision was submitted by the Governor in June 2012 and thusly approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The *Texas NPS Management Program* is jointly administered by the TSSWCB and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

Implementation of the *Texas NPS Management Program* involves partnerships among many organizations. With the extent and variety of NPS issues across Texas, cooperation across political boundaries is essential. SWCDs are vital partners in working with landowners to implement best management practices (BMPs) that prevent and

abate agricultural and silvicultural NPS water pollution.

More information on the *Texas NPS Management Program* is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/managementprogram>.

Nonpoint Source Grant Program

FY2011 – FY2014 CWA §319(h) Grant Status

There are currently 30 on-going §319(h) grant-funded projects addressing a wide array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues. Unliquidated federal funds for these 30 on-going projects total approximately \$6.8 million and are primarily being used to implement BMPs to abate NPS pollution from animal feeding operations, grazing livestock operations and row crop operations; provide technical assistance through SWCDs for the development of WQMPs; provide financial incentives for implementing certain BMPs prescribed in WQMPs; support various targeted educational programs; develop and implement Watershed Protection Plans (WPP); and implement the NPS portion of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plans (I-Plan).

FY2014 – FY2015 State Grant Status

There are currently 16 on-going projects addressing an array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues. Unliquidated state funds for these on-going projects total approximately \$1.2 million and are primarily being used to implement agricultural NPS components of TMDL I-Plans; conduct Recreational Use Attainability Analyses (RUAA); support increased analytical infrastructure at public bacterial source tracking (BST) laboratories; demonstrate innovative BMPs on animal feeding operations and grazing lands; and collect and analyze water quality data for watersheds with impaired waterbodies.

Water Quality Planning and Implementation

Coordination with TCEQ

On September 25, 2015, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch, Ashley Wendt, Liza Marshall, Wesley Gibson, Mitch Conine, TJ Helton] met with TCEQ staff in Austin to discuss and coordinate the many on-going activities between the two agencies.

Many topics were discussed including water quality standard revisions, success stories, and the CWA §319(h) FY16 request for proposals and grant applications. An update on the progress of resolving the conditional approval status of the Texas Coastal NPS Pollution Control Program was discussed as well.

Annual Texas A&M Forest Service Wetland/BMP Coordinating Committee

On September 29, 2015, TSSWCB SRM staff [Wesley Gibson] attended the annual Texas A&M Forest Service Wetland / BMP Coordinating Committee. Held in Waco, this conference featured discussion of current issues/projects related to Texas water, wetlands and forests.

Galveston Bay Estuary Program

Galveston Bay is an estuary of national importance and, through the federal CWA §320, is included in the National Estuary Program administered by the EPA. The Galveston Bay Council (GBC) is the stakeholder advisory group that coordinates the implementation of the Galveston Bay Plan, which is a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan developed under the auspices of the National Estuary Program. The TSSWCB is a named member of the Galveston Bay Council.

On September 29, 2015, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a Galveston Bay Council Budget and Priorities Subcommittee meeting in Houston. This meeting was held to approve the FY2017 budget for the Galveston Bay Estuary Program. The different subcommittees submitted projects for approval and all were approved.

More information is available at <http://www.gbep.state.tx.us/>. The implementation of the Galveston Bay Plan affects agricultural and silvicultural operations in watersheds that drain to the Galveston Bay complex in Brazoria, Chambers, Galveston, Harris and Liberty Counties.

More information, including meeting materials, is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/cwp>.

Other State District III Projects

Project: "Recreational Use Attainability Analysis for San Miguel Creek",

Nueces River Authority: State
\$128,571

On September 16, 2015, TSSWCB SRM staff [Wesley Gibson] participated in a public meeting in Pearsall to discuss the ongoing RUAA on San Miguel Creek. The meeting was to inform local stakeholders on the findings from the second field survey and let them know what the next steps in the RUAA process will be. More information on this RUAA is available at <http://www.nueces-ra.org/>.

STATE DISTRICT IV

Double Bayou

Impairment: Bacteria, Dissolved Oxygen
Mechanism: WPP
Lead: TSSWCB
Project: "Development of a Watershed Protection Plan for Double Bayou", Houston Advanced Research Center; Federal \$1,023,614/ External \$388,149

On September 15, 2015, TSSWCB SRM staff [Brian Koch] attended a Double Bayou WPP meeting in Double Bayou. This meeting was held to update stakeholders on the progress of the WPP and to get comment on the newly introduced chapters. The load reductions needed in the tidal portion of the watershed were also discussed.

More information is available at <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/watersheds#doublebayou>. This WPP has the potential to affect agricultural operations in the Double Bayou watershed in Chambers and Liberty Counties.

OTHER DISTRICT IV PROJECTS

Project: "Recreational Use Attainability Analysis for Ten Creeks in the Red River and Neches Basins", Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research at Tarleton State University: State \$406,298*

On September 15, 2015, TSSWCB SRM [Mitch Conine] staff attended an RUAA meeting for Choctaw and Iron Ore Creeks in Sherman to discuss an ongoing RUAA and inform local

stakeholders on the findings of the last field survey as well as release the final report for a 30 day comment period. More information on this RUAA as well as the Final Report is available at <http://tiaer.tarleton.edu/ruaa/index.html>.

On September 16, 2015, TSSWCB SRM [Mitch Conine] staff attended an RUAA meeting for Smith Creek in Paris to discuss an ongoing RUAA and inform local stakeholders on the findings of the last field survey as well as release the final report for a 30 day comment period. More information on this RUAA as well as the Final Report is available at <http://tiaer.tarleton.edu/ruaa/index.html>.

On September 17, 2015, TSSWCB SRM staff [Mitch Conine] attended an RUAA meeting for Mud Creek in De Kalb to discuss an ongoing RUAA and inform local stakeholders on the findings of the last field survey as well as release the final report for a 30 day comment period. More information on this RUAA as well as the Final Report is available at <http://tiaer.tarleton.edu/ruaa/index.html>.

Upcoming Public Meetings

- October 29, 2015 – Mission/Aransas I-plan Meeting (Refugio)
- October 29, 2015 – Sheldon Lake State Park Wetland Field Day (Houston)
- October 29, 2015 – Arroyo Colorado Steering Committee Meeting (Weslaco)
- November 3, 2015 – Bacteria Implementation Group Meeting (Houston)
- November 5, 2015 – Navasota River WPP Stakeholder Meeting (College Station)
- November 10, 2015 – Double Bayou WPP Meeting (Double Bayou)
- November 10, 2015 – Leon River WPP Stakeholder Meeting (Hamilton)
- November 10, 2015 – Navasota River WPP Stakeholder Meeting (Franklin)
- December 2, 2015 – Texas Groundwater Protection Committee Public Outreach Education Subcommittee Meeting (Austin)

FLOOD CONTROL DAM PROGRAMS

The TSSWCB is appropriated general revenue by the Texas Legislature to provide grants to the sponsors of flood control dams for operation, maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation. The TSSWCB administers an Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Grant Program and a Structural Repair Grant Program, both of which are administered according to rules adopted by the State Board in 31TAC529. The rules for these programs specify which flood control dams are eligible for funding, the entities that are eligible to apply and receive funding, and the conditions under which a grant must be administered, matched, and reported.

For FY2015, \$1,000,000 was allocated to 69 dam sponsors to conduct O&M activities on flood control dams through June 30, 2017. To date there is a balance of \$295,989 that still needs to be spent before the June 2017 deadline.

On July 31, 2015 a guidance document and program forms were sent to all eligible sponsors, notifying them of the changes to the way the Flood Control Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Grant Program will be run in fiscal year 2016. Starting August 1, 2015 sponsors could begin submitting proposals for approval. To date a total of 22 proposals have been received. 18 proposals have been approved to complete O&M activities in the amount of \$362,493.00, leaving a remaining balance of \$587,507.00.

The TSSWCB has contracted with the Dalworth SWCD to conduct a major repair on Mountain Creek, Site 10, in Ellis County using \$5,600,000 of FY2014 funds.

The TSSWCB has contracted with the Ellis-Prairie SWCD to complete needed repairs on Chambers Creek site 5, in Ellis County.

The TSSWCB has also contracted with Wise County to complete needed repairs on Denton Creek site 17, in Wise County using \$222,948.00 of FY2015 funds. A contractor has been selected and work has begun.

Dam Rehabilitation

In FY 2014, TSSWCB signed ten Project Agreements with NRCS for \$13 million in federal rehabilitation funding for planning, design, and construction. In FY 2015, TSSWCB signed four new project agreements and three amendments to existing agreements for an additional \$8.5 million in federal rehabilitation funding. TSSWCB is contracting for engineering services and construction on these dams.

Following is the current status of rehabilitation projects:

Planning

Plum Creek 10, Hays County
Plum Creek 12, Hays County
Plum Creek 21, Caldwell County
Lower Plum Creek 28, Caldwell County
Lower Running Water Draw 4, Hale County
Chambers 10, Ellis County
Chambers 11, Ellis County

Design

East Fork Above Lavon 4, Collin County
Williams Creek 3, Gillespie County
Lower Brushy 20, Williamson County
Upper Brushy 32, Williamson County

Construction

Mountain Creek 10, Ellis County
East Fork Above Lavon 2A, Collin County
Calaveras Creek 10, Bexar County
Martinez Creek 1, Bexar County
Martinez Creek 2, Bexar County
Martinez Creek 3, Bexar County
Plum Creek 6, Hays County
Olmitos Garcias 7, Starr County

For more information on these programs, please visit the TSSWCB's website at:

<http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/en/floodcontrol>

Monthly Program News and Activities is published by the TSSWCB for use by Texas SWCD Directors. If you have any questions regarding its contents, or have information you would like to see in a future issue, please call (254) 773-2250.



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Established in 1939, the TSSWCB administers Texas' soil and water conservation law and delivers coordinated natural resource conservation programs to agricultural producers through the State's 216 individual SWCDs. The agency is governed by a seven-member State Board composed of two Governor appointees and five individuals elected from across Texas by 1,080 Directors of local SWCDs. The TSSWCB is the lead state agency for planning, implementing, and managing programs for preventing and abating agricultural and silvicultural (forestry) nonpoint sources of water pollution; administers a water supply enhancement program through the targeted control of brush species in areas in need of water conservation; provides operation, maintenance, and structural repair grant funds to local government sponsors of the State's network of 2,000 flood control dams; and facilitates the Texas Invasive Species Coordinating Committee.